

1 MR. VERNIERO: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: I suspect we're
3 going to hear varying views on that subject in the
4 next day and a half, and I'd very much like to have
5 the statistics from the Attorney General of the state.
6 That would be very helpful.

7 MR. VERNIERO: Certainly.

8 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you. We will
10 submit those, and they will be a part of our record.

11 Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Yeah, but I want to
13 have them today and tomorrow though.

14 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Great.

15 MR. VERNIERO: I have copies,
16 Commissioner. I'll drop them off.

17 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN JAMES: If I can ask staff to
19 pick those up, make copies, and give them to all of
20 the Commissioners, that would be good.

21 The Honorable Kenneth Le Fevre.

22 MR. LE FEVRE: Thank you.

1 Good morning and welcome. I appreciate
2 the opportunity to contribute my thoughts to you
3 today.

4 I'm fortunate to represent Atlantic City
5 in the state legislature. In the last few years
6 Atlantic City and Atlantic County have emerged as a
7 flourishing commercial center and a good place to find
8 work or operate a business.

9 You have already heard statistics that
10 indicate the region's booming, and it's in large part
11 due to the positive influence of the casino industry.

12 Casinos mean different things to different
13 people. To some they mean a place to go and have a
14 good time. To many others in this state and beyond,
15 casinos mean employment. It's not a surprise that the
16 gaming industry in this region is the largest
17 employer, and it's no surprise that the effect of
18 direct casino salaries and wages of \$1 billion
19 annually are plowed right back into the communities
20 through the State of New Jersey.

21 Atlantic County heads the list of counties
22 which benefit by the dollar volume of casino service

1 industry business. However, the second and third in
2 line are the northern counties of Essex and Middlesex,
3 respectively, with a combined share of almost 20
4 percent of the total casino business.

5 These direct benefits of gaming seem
6 pretty obvious, but I'd like to give you some examples
7 of the good things, the human things, that are the
8 indirect benefits of gaming.

9 There are over 8,200 approved vendors from
10 all over the state that service our industry. One of
11 them is AC Coin & Slot Company, owned by Mack and Kay
12 Seelig. Their business, which is one of the premier
13 casino supply companies in the United States, is
14 flourishing, but their lives weren't always filled
15 with successes.

16 Back in the mid-'70s, the Seeligs, who were
17 born and educated in Atlantic City, were ready to get
18 out, move to a better place. There was no business
19 possibilities and no industry beckoned on a good deal,
20 but something very important happened to change their
21 minds and change their lot in life and make them stay.
22 That was the casino referendum of 1976.

1 Today the Seeligs contribute a \$4 million
2 payroll to the economy and employ more than 120
3 individuals in their firm, from truck drivers to
4 artists and sculptors of their work. Yes, the AC Coin
5 & Slot Company is prospering.

6 But just as importantly, the Seeligs have
7 made it their life to be involved in their community
8 and help others. They have displayed sincere concern
9 for society through participation in events, such as
10 the American Cancer Society, receiving the 1996
11 American Cancer Society Silver Sword Award. They have
12 lent support to other great charitable causes, such as
13 the Atlantic City Rescue Mission, Family Services,
14 United Way, Boy Scouts of America, the Success by Six
15 Program which benefits young children, and the
16 American Heart Association.

17 Kay Seelig is head of ACORA, Inc., the
18 foundation that started Beach Fest, which
19 was designed to generate tourism and positive
20 awareness for Atlantic City.

21 Another vitally important component of the
22 Seelig's life is their philanthropic. Recently AC Coin

1 & Slot Company donated gaming equipment valued in
2 excess of a half million dollars to Atlantic Community
3 College. This was done out of a sincere desire to
4 help meet the needs of students preparing for entry
5 into the expanding market.

6 For their relentless efforts on behalf of
7 the community, the Seeligs have received numerous
8 awards. Topping the list of the couple's recent
9 awards is the prestigious 1997 Bailey Award given
10 annually by the Atlantic City press which recognizes
11 the positive difference made by these unselfish
12 business people in the lives of the people of their
13 own town.

14 Aren't we all lucky the Seeligs didn't move
15 away?

16 Again, ladies and gentlemen, this is the
17 human side of gaming, and this is just one example of
18 what one vendor can do to improve the quality of life
19 in the state.

20 There are other human sides of gaming.
21 When the legislation that legalized gambling in
22 Atlantic City was passed 20 years ago, the entire

1 state was promised benefits to be derived from taxes
2 placed on the industry's casino activities, casino
3 lendings, and is sent to the New Jersey treasury. The
4 taxes placed in the casino revenue fund which supports
5 programs to assist senior citizens and handicapped
6 persons.

7 Since Resorts International was opened in
8 1978, the industry has sent more than \$3.8 billion to
9 the Treasury. In 1997 alone, this figure amounted to
10 315 million.

11 I'd like to mention the two largest
12 individual programs funded primarily by casino tax
13 revenue because together they receive more than half
14 of the tax dollars. I'm referring as you heard
15 earlier to the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged
16 or Disabled, or PAAD, and the Lifeline Program.
17 You've already heard a good deal about PAAD and its
18 critical role in the lives of our senior and disabled
19 citizens.

20 I'd like to add to that one bit of
21 information I received recently directly from the
22 Department of Health and Senior Services. An official

1 there told me that the department regularly receives
2 letters from New Jersey residents moving out of the
3 state who take the time to write and say how much they
4 appreciated the pharmaceutical assistance they
5 received in New Jersey.

6 But more interestingly, many times state
7 officials hear back from those individuals with sad
8 tales of how they can't meet their medical expenses in
9 the state they elected to move to, and they're moving
10 back to New Jersey. Only ten other states offer
11 programs comparable to our PAAD. I think you can see
12 why we're very proud of a program like PAAD and why
13 it's another important face of the human side of
14 gaming.

15 Consider the Lifeline Program of heating
16 assistance, which is very familiar to me as an
17 employee of an electric energy company. The Lifeline
18 Program is also largely funded by the casino revenue
19 tax and has an annual budget of about \$30 million.

20 A needy senior or disabled citizen can
21 receive \$225 in just one year to help defray the cost
22 of their heating bill. Statewide more than 140,000

1 senior and disabled citizens receive this assistance.

2 My employer, Atlantic Energy, can see the
3 Lifeline Program in action regularly. Our customer
4 service representatives receive calls every day from
5 worried, sometimes frantic elderly citizens who want
6 desperately to be current on their electric bill, but
7 just can't do it alone.

8 When the customer service rep. can tell
9 the customer their bill will be paid in full or
10 significantly reduced upon the receipt of the Lifeline
11 payment, the audible relief on the other end of the
12 line is proof yet of another face of the human side of
13 the gaming industry.

14 Since the current heating season began in
15 October of 1997, more than 10,000 Atlantic Electric
16 customers have alone seen their outstanding balance go
17 down because of this assistance, and that number will
18 grow in months to come.

19 I think it's important to ponder the
20 possible consequences were these types of gaming
21 funded programs not available, also how much our
22 communities would lose if vendors such as Mack and Kay

1 Seelig were not in the position to give so generously.

2 In recent years, New Jersey government has
3 worked to enable the gaming industry to better serve
4 the citizens of the entire state. As an elected
5 official, I'm very proud to be a member of the
6 Commerce, Tourism, Gaming, and Military and Veterans'
7 Affairs Committee. That's a long title, but very
8 important, and as lawmakers, we are committed to
9 continuing to bring New Jersey citizens the far
10 reaching benefits a flourishing gaming industry can
11 provide.

12 I want to thank you for your attention,
13 and enjoy your stay.

14 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you so much.

15 Mayor Whelan.

16 MR. WHELAN: Madame Chairman and members
17 of the Commission, let me welcome you, add my welcome
18 to the governor and others who spoke before me. We're
19 delighted any time people come to Atlantic City to
20 visit us because that's what we do. We're in the
21 hospitality business, and when we have visitors, it's
22 a pleasure to come and welcome.